

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2193

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 10147

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG CH MC

SUBJ: POSSIBLE CHINESE INTEREST IN AN OIL REFINERY IN MACAU

SUMMARY: TWO OF MACAU'S LARGEST CHINESE BUSINESSMEN, HO YIN AND MA MAN-KEE --- BOTH OF WHOM ARE REGARDED AS SEMI-OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRC IN MACAU--- HAVE PETITIONED THE MACAU GOVERNMENT FOR PERMISSION TO BUILD AN OIL REFINERY ON COLOANE ISLAND. PRESUMABLY A REFINERY IN MACAU WOULD OBTAIN ITS CRUDE OIL FROM CHINA. INDIRECTLY, AND THEREFORE WITHOUT EMBARRASSMENT, CHINA MAY OBTAIN FOREIGN TECHNICAL AID AND FINANCING FOR ADDITIONAL REFINING CAPACITY IN SOUTH CHINA.
END SUMMARY

1. THE HONG KONG STANDARD (AUGUST 29) HAS REPORTED THAT TWO OF MACAU'S LEADING CHINESE BUSINESSMEN, HO YIN AND MA MAN -KEE-- BOTH OF WHOM ARE REGARDED AS SEMI-OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES OF CHINA IN MACAU--- HAVE PETITIONED THE MACAU GOVERNMENT
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FOR PERMISSION TO BUILD AN OIL REFINERY (ALONG WITH A

CONTAINER TERMINAL AND AN ICE-MAKING PLANT) ON COLOANE ISLAND. THE STANDARD REPORTER NOTED SEVERAL PECULIARITIES IN THE PETITION, INCLUDING THE PROJECTED COAST (HK \$98.5 MILLION) AND A NAMED PARTNER (HONG KONG UNITED DOCKYARDS) WHOSE SPOKESMAN DECLARED THAT "WE ARE NOT REMOTELY INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE PROJECTS, NOR DO WE HAVE ANY FORMAL AGREEMENT WITH HO YIN, THOUGH WE HAVE HAD INFORMAL TALKS WITH HIM," THE POINT OF INTEREST, HOWEVER, IS THAT TWO BUSINESSMEN, BOTH WITH CLOSE CONNECTIONS TO THE CHINESE ARE PROCEEDING WITH PLANS TO BUILD A REFINERY IN MACAU.

2. PRESUMABLY, ANY REFINERY IN MACAU, PARTICULARLY ONE FINANCED IN PART BY HO YIN AND MA MAN-KEE, WOULD GET ITS CRUDE OIL FROM CHINA. ASSUMING THAT HO YIN AND MA MAN-KEE ARE ACTING AS AGENTS FOR CHINA, THE PROJECT PRESENTS THE CHINESE WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE, INDIRECTLY, FOREIGN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FINANCING TO BUILD REFINING CAPACITY IN (ESSENTIALLY) SOUTH CHINA. QUITE POSSIBLY, THE CONSTRUCTION COULD BE PARTLY PAID FOR IN REFINED PRODUCTS (ESSENTIALLY CRUDE OIL) AND THE CHINESE COULD SEND ENGINEERS AND TECHNICIANS TO THE REFINERY TO STUDY MODERN REFINING TECHNIQUES. EVERYTHING CONSIDERED, SUCH A PROJECT WOULD PRESENT MANY ADVANTAGES TO THE CHINESE-- ADVANTAGES WHICH IT WOULD BE EMBARRASSING FOR PEKING TO OBTAIN MORE DIRECTLY. FOR EXAMPLE, THEIR IDEOLOGICAL BLAST AT THE SOVIETS, WHOM THEY CHIDE FOR SELLING NATURAL RESOURCES, WOULD MAKE IT EMBARRASSING FOR THEM TO TRADE CRUDE OIL FOR A REFINERY.

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